

Message Text

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TAGS: CASC, MX, PINT, SNAR, CGEN
SUBJ: LOCAL PRESS COMMENTS ON HIGHWAY ASSAULTS AND CULIACAN CRIME.

1. THE MEXICAN ARMY, ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS, HAS BEEN ORDERED TO PRESENT A SHOW OF STRENGTH AND HAS PARADED IN CULIACAN, LOS MOCHIS, AND GUAMUCHIL, SINALOA, MAKING IT CLEAR THAT IT IS SEARCHING FOR DRUG TRAFFICKERS AND ARMS. CULIACAN'S MAYOR, LIC. FORTUNATO ALVAREZ, IS NOW ISSUING CRIME BULLETINS PROVIDING DETAILED STATISTICS. FOR EXAMPLE, FROM JANUARY 1-16 EIGHTEEN PERSONS WERE KILLED, TEN IN CULIACAN AND THE REST IN RURAL AREAS. THIRTY-NINE WERE REPORTED WOUNDED WITH FIREARMS. WITH THESE FIGURES, THE MAYOR WAS TRYING TO WIPE OUT THE PICTURE OF CULIACAN AS A SEAT OF VIOLENT CRIME. IN ANY EVENT, HE OBSERVED IT IS BETTER TO REPORT ALL CRIMES TRUTHFULLY THAN TO DISTORT CULIACAN'S IMAGE WITH FALSE INFORMATION.

2. ON JANUARY 21, A COLUMNIST FOR MAZATLAN'S "EL DEMOCRATA" WROTE THAT STATE CAPITOL HAD PROHIBITED PRESS FROM INFORMING PUBLIC OF HIGHWAY ASSAULTS ON TOURISTS AS MEASURE TO AVOID DISSEMINATING ALARMING INFORMATION PREJUDICIAL TO TOURISM. COLUMNIST FURTHER STATED THAT IT WOULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE TO PUNISH DELINQUENTS WHO DEDICATE THEMSELVES TO LUCRATIVE ASSAULTS ON FOREIGN TOURISTS BUT AUTHORITIES RESOLVE THESE SERIOUS PROBLEMS BY CONCEALING THE
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INFORMATION SO THAT QUOTE YELLOW JOURNALISM UNQUOTE WILL BE UNABLE DISTURB SINALOA'S "TRANQUILITY" WITH ALARMING AND SCANDALOUS NEWS.

3. COLUMNIST ALEJANDRO OLAIS OF "EL DEBATE", JANUARY 17 DESCRIBED SINALOA'S IMAGE IN MEXICO CITY AND REPORTED THAT HE CONSIDERED IT ILLOGICAL FOR GOVERNOR TO ACCUSE HIS POLITICAL

ENEMIES OF INDUCING U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO WARN AMERICANS THAT IT WAS DANGEROUS TO TRAVEL IN SINALOA. OLAI REPORTED THAT SINCE THE ENEMIES WERE UNNAMED, THEY MIGHT BE THE LAND OWNERS WHO OPPOSED SUPPORT GIVEN BY HIS REGIME TO CAMPESINOS'. HE SUGGESTED THERE MAY BE ANOTHER TYPE OF ENEMY AMONG SINALOAN OFFICIALS WHO HAVE BEEN PLACED, BECAUSE OF THEIR ABILITY, IN THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT LOPEZ-PORTILLO. OLAI THEN INQUIRED "WOULD THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE (DEPARTAMENTO DE ESTADO DE LOS GRINGOS) ALLOW ITSELF TO BE USED AS THE TOOL FOR THE IN FIGHTING BETWEEN CALDERON AND HIS POLITICAL ENEMIES?. LEAVING HIS QUESTION UNANSWERED, THE COLUMNIST CONTINUE THAT SINALOA WISHES TO SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT AND TO WORK IN HARMONY, HOPING THAT ITS GOVERNOR WILL PUT THE ECHEVERRIA INFLUENCE ASIDE AND TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONSOLIDATE HIS REGIME WHICH HAS BEEN UNABLE TO STABILIZE ITSELF DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS.

4. "SINALOA OPINA", NOT A PRESTIGIOUS PUBLICATION, ON JANUARY 14 CARRIED INTERVIEW WITH MAZATLAN'S ACTING POLICE CHIEF WHO REPORTED THAT CULIACAN, SAN IGNACIO AND MAZATLAN, ARE THREE CITIES WITH HIGHEST CRIME INDEX IN STATE OF SINALOA. COMMENTING THAT MAJORITY OF CRIMES GO UNSOLVED BECAUSE OF INADEQUATE POLICE FORCES UNABLE TO COPE WITH SITUATION, HE PROPOSED AN ESTABLISHMENT OF PLAIN CLOTHES CORPS TO REPLACE SECRET SERVICE ABOLISHED ONLY TWO MONTHS AGO DUE TO COMPLAINTS AGAINST THEM FOR SHAKING DOWN TOURISTS. POLICE CHIEF STATED THAT SUCH FORCE WOULD HELP IN SOME MEASURE TO CONSTRAIN CRIME.

5. COMMENT: RECENTLY GOVERNOR APPEALED TO PRESIDENT TO ASSIST HIM IN RESTORING SECURITY TO SINALOA. HE NOW CONDEMNING FOREIGN UNCLASSIFIED

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PRESS FOR CAUSING TOURIST SLUMP. GOVERNOR HAS STATED PUBLICLY THAT CERTAIN DETRACTORS ARE FEEDING MISINFORMATION ABOUT SINALOAN CONDITIONS TO PRESS. MATTHEWS

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